

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A radio access network (20) comprises plural radio network controllers (24) including a first radio network controller. The plural radio network controllers are situated to establish one or more overlapping routing areas (URAs), each overlapping routing area comprising a cell controlled by the first radio network controller and at least one cell controlled by another of the plural radio network controllers. For signaling purposes over a signaling network (30), the first radio network controller need only store network addresses for: (1) any of the plural radio network controllers which controls a cell in any overlapping routing area; and, (2) any of the plural radio network controllers which functions as a serving radio network controller for a connection for which the first radio network controller functions as a drift radio network controller. When a user equipment unit (UE) moves into an overlapping routing area (in which a second radio network controller also controls cells), the first radio network controller sends, in a signaling message to a serving radio network controller, both (1) an address of the first radio network controller, and (2) the address of the other radio network controllers controlling cells in the overlapping routing area. The information storage and signaling of the present invention thereby enable the serving radio network controller to page the user equipment unit throughout the overlapping routing area.